

An
Inaugural Essay
On Fever
for the
Degree of Doctor of Medicine
by
Charles Ridgway
Eleventh Month 25th 1923

1840
The
Lancaster

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Preface

The following observations on a dangerous
form of fever which prevailed at Bushkill
Pike county Penna. in the Winter 1812 & 13
Are diffidently and most respectfully
submitted to the consideration of the
Medical faculty in the hope that the
humble effort of the Author to comply
with a salutary Law of the University
will meet with their kind indulgence.

1848

The following is a statement
of the sum of money received of
the several donors in the District of
Columbia for the year ending
the 31st day of December 1847
and is submitted to the
Commissioners of the
District of Columbia for their
approval and signature.

An account of an Epidemic fever which prevailed in the neighbourhood of Bushkill Pike county Penna in the Winter of 1818 & 19

Bushkill is situated on the western margin of the River Delaware. the opposite side of the River is bounded by a high Mountain called the blue ridge — about a mile back from the River on the Penna side there is a long range of Hills which run parallel with the River — the River and adjacent streams are rapid — there is no marsh or swampy ground in the neighbourhood and the situation has generally been considered a healthy one. There are about twenty Houses which compose the neighbourhood known by the name of Bushkill they stand within the circumference of a mile.

Case 1st

I was called on the 2^d of the twelfth month
 (December) 1819 to see James Smith found him
 in such a state of delirium that he could not
 give a history of his case. — his Mother told
 me that he complained for the last thirty
 six hours of pain in all his bones and occasion-
 ally he would say that he felt a shooting
 pain in his Head and sick at his Stomach
 and that about two hours before I saw him
 he became much worse — He had at this
 time a hot skin a full and somewhat tense
 pulse great depression of muscular strength
 his Eye were full heavy and a little inflam-
 ed his tongue was covered with a white
 viscid mucus and the carotids were throbb-
 ing violently — he had great thirst and
 called every few minutes for more cold
 water which had been given to him
 without any limits — I observed that every

1807

There is a great deal of
work to be done in the
country, and it is not
easy to find men to
do it. The people are
very idle, and they
do not like to work
for wages. They prefer
to live in poverty
than to work for a
little money. This is
the state of the
country, and it is
very bad. The
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drink of cold water which he took appeared to make his respiration more difficult and that he was more restless directly after drinking— Therefore ordered him to drink warm - *Nepeta Cataracta* tea instead of cold water— but in consequence of my not being able to obtain any febrifuge on that day I prescribed nothing else.

Having obtained some febrifuge medicines called to see him found all his symptoms in a more aggravated form— gave him an Emetic of ~~tartar~~ emetic 15 gr which brought away a great deal of bile and all his symptoms appeared to be in some degree relieved.

I prepared a saline mixture by adding Subcarbonat of Potash to Vinegar until it ceased to effervesce ordered him to take a large spoonful of this once in three hours until there was an exacerbation of fever then take it once an hour and continue to drink freely of the *Nepeta Cataracta* tea

5th Found his tongue dry brown and tremulous pulse small and frequent and that his bowels had not been evacuated for the last twenty four hours. gave him Cal^d Salap each ten Gr ordered the saline mixture and warm drinks continued after the cathartic had operated

6th Found that the cathartic had operated promptly without any material advantage to the morbid symptoms. ordered the saline mixture and frequent drinks of warm catnip tea continued

7th He had drank about a pint of cold water last evening at the exacerbation of the fever and soon after became quite delirious, the fur on his tongue took thicker and darker - cannot perceive any alteration in his pulse - his skin remains dry - slight twitching which he had the first time I saw him are now much increased. ordered him to have no more cold water but drink the *Scutella Eulonia* tea warm - continue the saline mixture - left some powders composed of Opium

Ipecac & Camphor of each one grain, ordered him to take one of these at the rise of the fever

9th Lies more tranquil supposed to be the effect of the sudorific powder no alteration in his pulse — tongue & teeth appear to be more incruusted — picks his nail and the bed clothes his bowels remain open has about three stools per day — same medicines continued

11th Cannot perceive any alteration since last visit — continued the same medicines —

13th Has not taken his medicines for the last twenty four hours — appears to be almost in a state of insensibility — pulse continues small and frequent — Ordered sinapisms of mustard to his feet which appeared to remove the stupor in about half an hour he then said that he would not again refuse to take his medicines — ordered the same continued and if the stupor come on again

to apply the sinapisms

14th Suffer came on again yesterday sinapisms again applied and produced obvious relief tongue and teeth continue covered with a black fur - so much so that he can hardly articulate his words - but there is to day for the first some moisture on his upper extremities - continued the same medicines

15th The last exacerbation terminated in a moderate perspiration diffused all over the surface - he does not pick the bed clothes so much - appears to have a more rational countenance.

These last mentioned symptoms went on increasing under the same treatment until the 23^d when he had a very profuse perspiration and next day his teeth & mouth became almost clean on the 25th I ordered him to drink a pint of strong decoction of Logwood

Bark daily, on the 30th he was able to walk
 about the room and his appetite knew
 no bounds. on the 2^d of the 1st month (January)
 he was a complete maniac talked and
 sung from morning until Night and
 if the family did not give him victuals
 when he wanted it he was furious, he would
 not take any medicines. and the family
 did not keep the victuals from him, he
 continued in this troublesome state until
 the 3th when he was attacked with cholera
 and was willing to take medicines I
 gave him Calomel & Salap ten grain
 each Tartar Emetic 1 gr this brought on
 an artificial cholera morbus, after the oper-
 ation his Intellects were rational and remained
 to be so, his convalescence was rapid from
 this time This man lived in a family
 composed of his Mother a Sister and six
 Brothers - between the 20th of the 12th Month

From 1800, on the 27th of May I was
about the house and the garden
in evening, on the 2^d of the 1st month (Sunday)
I was a complete manure labourer and
was from morning until 12 o'clock and
of the evening and was from 12 o'clock
when he went to his room for a while
and took some medicine. And the family
there was with the mother from then on
continued in the same manner till the
12th of the month he was attacked with cold
and was unable to do any work
and his father took the place of the mother
and the family continued in the same manner
as before. And the mother was again from
the 12th of the month and was a family
member of the family. A letter was
written - about the 12th of the 1st month

(December) and the 15th of the 2^d Month
 (February) five of the brothers were attacked
 with the disease four of their cases were
 very similar to the one just described the
 same treatment was instituted and the febrile
 symptoms yielded about the 21st day—
 the other case there was no difference in
 the attack pain in the Head nausea pro-
 stration of strength chills and flushes were
 all present—but after the operation of a
 powerful Cathartic of Calomel & Salap.
 all these symptoms disappeared.

Case 2^d

I was called on the 12th of the 12th month
 (December) to Catherine Barton aged seven
 years whose Father and Mother had both
 died a few days since with fever— I found
 that she had been attacked on the 2nd of
 the 9th was confined to her bed but declined

having any medical aid — saying that it
 never did her Father or Mother any good
 and that she had rather trust to nature.
 She was now in a comatose state with a
 brown dry tongue — pulse small and about
 one hundred in a minute. I ascertained
 that she had taken nothing to cleanse
 her Stomach & Intestines and with some
 difficulty we roused her and got her to
 take Calomel sm-gr Salap & gr it operated
 in about six hours the evacuations came
 away involuntarily — stupor increased
 and we could not get her to take medicines
 or nourishment — She died in about
 sixty hours after I first saw her.
 This case goes to show how the disease
 terminated when left to nature.

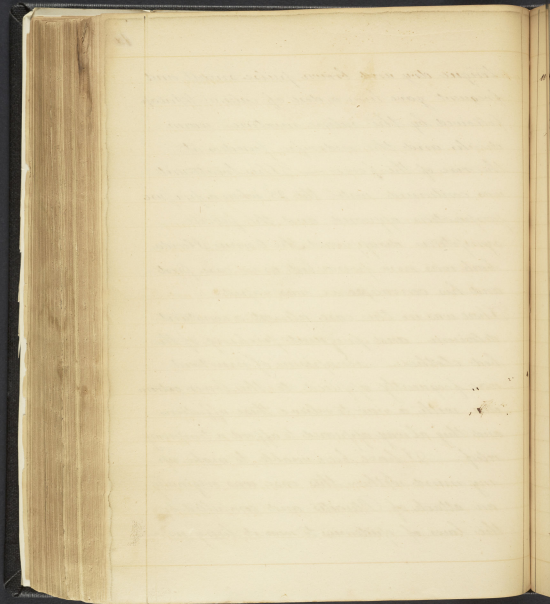
Case 3^d

I was called on the 5th of the 1st Month
 (January) 1819 to Simeon Sweetwood

a man of plethoric habit, found him
 with a violent pain in his left side
 hot skin full and frequent pulse
 difficult respiration— I immediately
 drew 16 ℥ of Blood from his arm which
 gave him great relief. ordered him to
 drink flaxseed tea with a view to relieve
 the cough and to take the saline mix-
 ture with a view to determine to the surface
 6th all the ~~herbid~~ symptoms have
 again appeared— took 16 ℥ more blood
 which gave immediate relief continue
 the saline mixture & flaxseed tea
 7th Say he feels the pain in his side
 at interval— took 10 ℥ more blood and
 put a blister over the pain, after the
 blister drew the pain in his side was
 entirely removed and other symptoms better
 9th His disease has now assumed the
 confirmed stage of the prevailing fever

tongue dry and brown pulse small and frequent gave him a dose of calomel \frac{ss} followed by the saline mixture warm drinks and the sudorific powder at the rise of the fever — This treatment was continued until the 23^d when a profuse perspiration appeared and the febrile symptoms disappeared the Cornus Florida bark was now prescribed as in case first and his convalescence was rapid.

There was in this case almost a constant delirium and frequent picking of the bed clothes — sinapisms of mustard were frequently applied to the lower extremities with a view to relieve these affections and they always appeared to afford a temporary relief — I have been unable to make up my mind whether this case was originally an attack of Pleuritis and compelled by the laws of epidemics to wear its livery or



whether it was the epidemic fever making its appearance in a more congestive form. This man's family was composed of his wife and five children aged 11th 9th 7th 4th & 1st year - the four youngest were all attacked between the 20th & 25th of the same month and had the disease in a malignant form. it did not come to a crisis in either case in less than twenty one day and the one aged seven, was unable to articulate one word for nine days owing to the fur on the tongue & teeth. Their treatment was the same as case 1st and they all got well. There were twenty seven cases of this disease, came under my care twenty five of which recovered - two died one of which has been mentioned - the other was a boy who had been prostrated six days with the fever before I was called to him he died on the 15th day from his attack.

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six of these cases appeared to be cut short they yielded in from five to ten days, the others did not yield until the 19th 21st or 23rd day — there were four more cases in the neighbourhood. (treated by two Physicians) all of which died. The symptoms in every case of those which came under my care (except case 3^d) very much resembled those of case 1st and the same treatment was adopted. I frequently had occasion to observe that when the Patients became weary of taking the acetate of potash and the *Urtica catenaria* tea as often as I directed — that their tongues would become more dry and the general condition of the patient worse: so that they were glad to recur to it again. Perhaps the question may be asked, as the fever run such a protracted course why I did not adopt some other plan of treatment

with a view to cut it short. My answer is that I had once seen a case of low fever terminate favourably under this plan of treatment. Therefore when I consented to prescribe to case 1st I resolved to try this course. — and although the case had a very gloomy appearance for a considerable time. I was afraid to change the treatment for that which I had not seen put in practice. — finding at length that the case was likely to do well I pursued the same plan of treatment in every case.

I prescribed the Sal-Diuretics and warm diluent drinks in the liberal manner before stated — with no other view than to obtain a sudorific effect — and although I soon observed that there was a remarkable diuresis I did not suspect at that time that it had any agency in blunting the violence of the

disease or of assisting nature in overcoming the morbid action. But my subsequent instruction has led me to suspect that it was the principal cause of my success in that malignant epidemic and that they are (Diuretics) a valuable class of remedies in that state of febrile disease where direct depletion is inadmissible. In support of this opinion I may mention the well known fact that the Kidneys are emunctories through which nature endeavours to relieve herself when oppressed by disordered action.

The epidemic first made its appearance in the fore part of the 11th Month (November) and ended about the 20th of the 2^d Month (February) and was confined to that small district while the adjacent neighbourhoods were quite healthy.

